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Directorate of Intelligence

Africa Review

5 July 1994

6 JUL 1994

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Articles

Page

OAU: Modest Accomplishments at June Summit

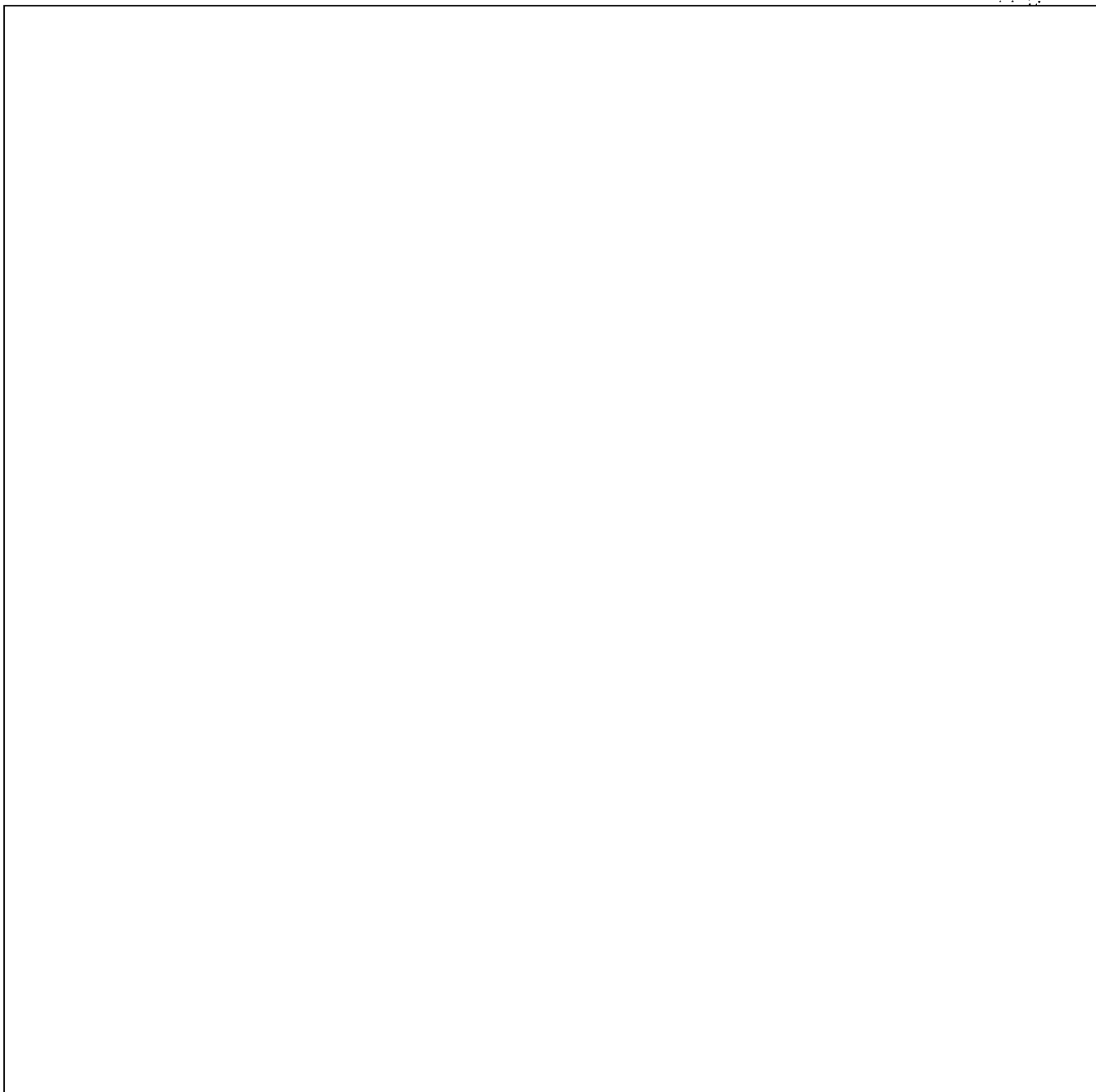
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Leaders of the OAU meeting in Tunis from 13 to 15 June managed some modest accomplishments at a summit overshadowed by Nelson Mandela's ceremonial presence and last-minute French plans to intervene in Rwanda.

Briefs

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OAU: Modest Accomplishments at June Summit

Leaders of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) meeting in Tunis from 13 to 15 June managed some modest accomplishments at a summit overshadowed by Nelson Mandela's ceremonial presence and last-minute French plans to intervene in Rwanda. A record of 42 heads of state were in attendance. Tunisia's President Ben Ali assumed the OAU chairmanship for the coming year, and the leaders of Sub-Saharan Africa's two most important countries—South Africa and Nigeria—were named vice-chairmen. Ethiopia was selected to host the 1995 OAU summit.

Apart from celebrating South Africa's admission as the OAU's 53rd member, summit conferees focused heavily on conflict resolution issues.

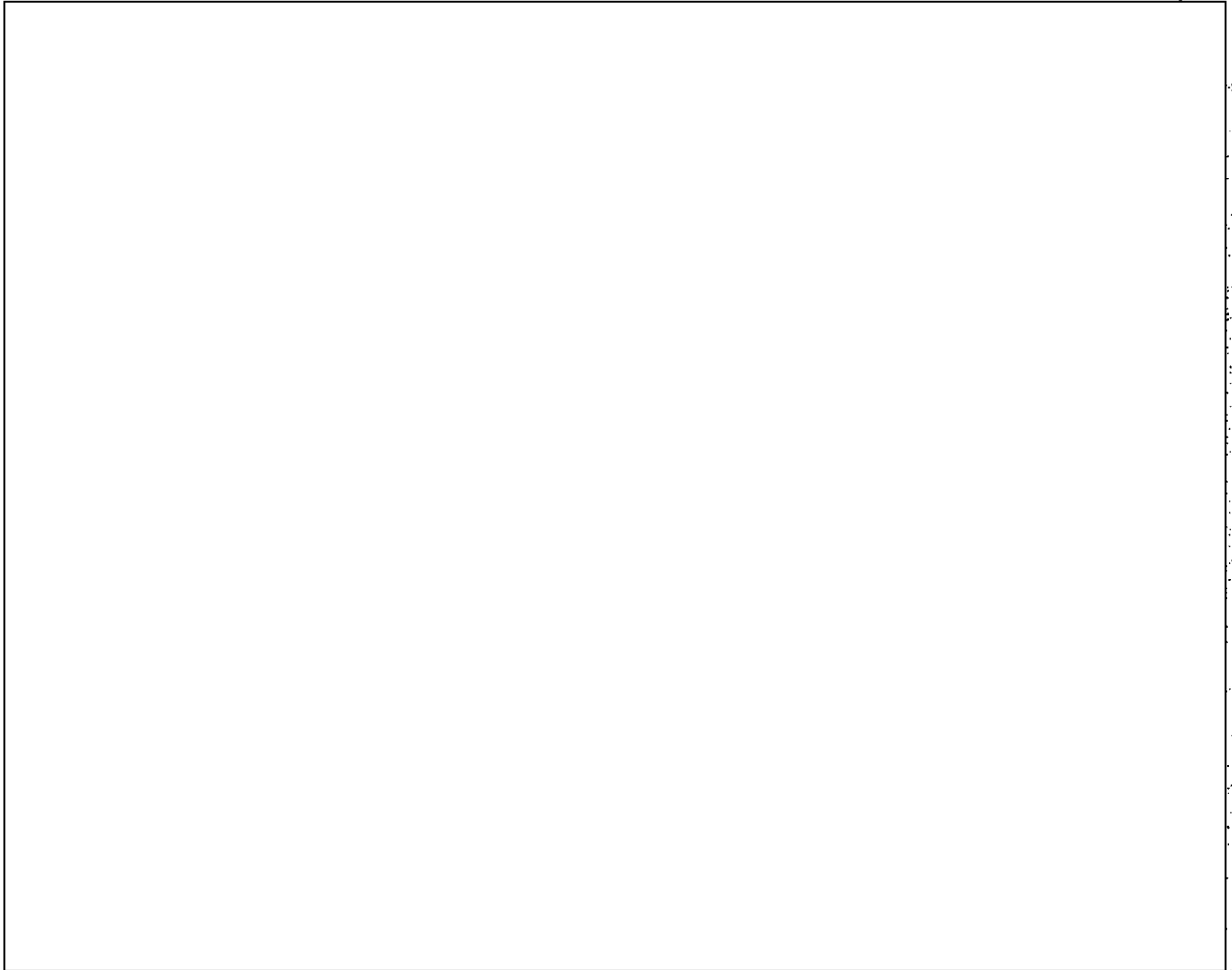
Conflict Resolution Mechanism. Some steps were taken to further institutionalize the OAU's nascent conflict resolution mechanism that was set up by last year's summit. Tunisia, Egypt, and Ethiopia were retained on the 11-member mechanism, and South Africa and Nigeria were added.¹ The group is charged with assessing the mechanism's effectiveness and increasing the frequency of its meetings to monthly at the ambassadorial level, biannually at the ministerial level, and annually at the OAU summit.

¹ The other members are Tanzania, Zaire, Cote d'Ivoire, Benin, Chad, and Mauritius, for a total of 11.

Rwanda. France's announcement on the last day of the summit of plans for unilateral intervention in Rwanda came after the collapse of a short-lived cease-fire that OAU conferees had devoted considerable time to arranging while insisting that the warring Rwandan parties return to the Arusha negotiations. Subsequent to the summit, the OAU secretariat in Addis Ababa released a statement that expressed lukewarm understanding for the French decision as well as fears of complications that might ensue because Rwanda's ethnic Tutsi rebels regard Paris as biased in favor of the interim Hutu extremist government. In advance of the French decision, Ben Ali voiced plans to send additional Tunisian troops to assist the UN's small and beleaguered UNAMIR peacekeeping group in Rwanda as a symbol of his resolve to deal with Sub-Saharan issues.

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